



MOCK TRIAL NEWSLETTER MARCH 2013

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Carolina Center for Civic Education and the NCAJ Mock Trial Committee
"Investing in our future, creating tomorrow's leaders"*

STATE CHAMPION CROWNED AT CAMPBELL LAW SCHOOL!!

*By Sue H. Johnson
CCCE Program Coordinator*



On **Friday, March 1, 2013** the eight Regional mock trial champions converged upon Campbell Law School in Raleigh, four-time host of the state finals competition. Before engaging in their own legal battles, the students toured the North Carolina Supreme Court, where they learned about appellate advocacy and the making of legal precedent in N.C. Justices Robert H. Edmunds, Jr., and Paul M. Newby inspired the students with stories from early N.C. legal history as well as a recounting of recent events. Returning to Campbell Law, the students were greeted by Campbell Interim Dean B. Keith Faulkner before the presentation of the "M. Gordon Widenhouse, Jr. Award for Visionary Leadership" (story below). After tours of the law school led by Campbell Law students who devoted part of their spring break to serving as gracious hosts, the participants proceeded to the evening reception to enjoy food and fellowship. To conclude the festivities, Representative Rick Glazier exhorted the students to make a difference in their communities, urging them to recognize that they have a moral obligation to leave the world a better place than they found it.

On **Saturday, March 2**, the students displayed impressive legal knowledge and convincing witness portrayals as they advocated once on each side of the civil case *Mia Donovan v. Shannon Dempsey, Jordan Reddick, and Rubicon Soccer Club*. All eight regional champions represented their schools very well; nearly every round was decided by split ballots, and no team won every ballot in preliminary competition. At the end of the two preliminary rounds, eight students earned "Best Attorney" and "Best Witness" awards; then all waited with

hearts pounding for the announcement of the two finalists: Central Carolina Homeschoolers and Gaston Christian School “Red” (the 2012 State Champions).

As the Honorable Justice Robert H. Edmunds, Jr. presided over the championship round, the students argued the case with passion and professionalism before the prestigious jury panel of Janet Ward Black, S. Quon Bridges, Guy W. Crabtree, Burton Craige, and Spencer Parris. In the end, the **Central Carolina Homeschoolers** were declared State Champion on split ballots, earning the right to represent North Carolina at the National High School Mock Trial competition in Indianapolis, Indiana in May! Congratulations to the Central Carolina Homeschoolers and all eight regional champions for their accomplishments this year! (*For complete results, visit <http://www.ncmocktrial.org/> and look under “latest news” in the right-hand column.*)

THANK YOU to the **STATE FINALS SPONSOR, RUDOLF WIDENHOUSE & FIALKO**, and the many legal professionals who volunteered their time as presiding judges, scoring jurors, and site volunteers at the **State Finals competition!!** Over forty judges and attorneys and a dozen other individuals devoted their Saturday to serving at state finals, including (in addition to those mentioned above) N.C. Supreme Court Justice Paul M. Newby; N.C. Court of Appeals Judges Wanda G. Bryant, R. Christopher Dillon, Richard A. Elmore, and Robert N. Hunter, Jr.; and N.C. Superior Court Judges Carl R. Fox, Lucy N. Inman and Mary Ann Tally. Their willingness to invest in the students is greatly appreciated!

RALEIGH CHARTER STUDENT WINS M. GORDON WIDENHOUSE, JR., LEADERSHIP AWARD!

By Sue H. Johnson
CCCE Program Coordinator

At the State Finals evening reception on Friday, March 1, **Richard Xianying He** of Raleigh Charter High School received the “M. Gordon Widenhouse, Jr. Award for Inspirational Team Leadership.” This award was established to honor the visionary leadership of Gordon Widenhouse, who has been instrumental in creating and sustaining the North Carolina Advocates for Justice High School Mock Trial Program, now in its twenty-first year. The award is open only to seniors who are recommended by a team advisor. It seeks to recognize an individual who may not be the “star” of the team; rather, the student may be the “glue” who holds the team together through practices and competition.



Raleigh Charter mock trial team advisor **Amy Marschall** explains why she nominated Richard for the award: “I made a decision a couple of years ago that I would only nominate a senior for the Widenhouse Award if prompted to do so by the students. Hardly had the announcement about the award been made at the regional competition before students were coming to me, urging me to nominate Richard. I wasn’t surprised – he’s an amazing young man, and very deserving.



“Michelle Li wrote to me to make Richard’s case, and I can’t really put it better: ‘First of all, it’s just so comforting to have him sitting beside you at that attorney table and knowing that he has our back. . . . I have so much trust and faith in him to back me up and help “lead” me when I’m in a rough patch. . . . [Even] in normal life when I’m having trouble with a question or a witness, I know I can count on Richard to give thoughtful advice. Most importantly, in the short time I’ve known Richard, I’ve realized just how motivated he makes me. Richard is a brilliant worker and attorney. . . . He makes our team realize that when we win, it’s not just for ourselves but for each other, and that it truly is a group effort.’”

In his application essay, **Richard** describes the lessons he learned through mock trial participation. “[As] a new, fledgling [mock trial team] member . . . all of these rules and regulations from this arcane rulebook were confusing and restricting. . . . But as the months progressed, I learned more and more. I began to realize that there were reasons for these rules of evidence, and I gained a deep appreciation for America’s legal system.

“In my first two years in mock trial . . . I got the opportunity to work on my public speaking skills and critical thinking skills, and grew to love the complex environment during trial competition which resembled that of an elaborate chess game.

“This year, as a senior and as team captain, I was able to learn about true leadership through first-hand experience. . . . I knew that preparation was key. . . . As a leader, I learned that giving constructive advice and keeping people on task was far superior to telling them what to do. I also learned that others typically rise to the occasion when more is demanded of them. Finally, I realized that passion is the most important aspect of leadership, [as it] convinces others that something is worth doing. . . . My three years in Mock Trial have transformed me not only into an effective and responsive leader, but also a citizen with a broader appreciation for the American legal system and a strong interest in pursuing a career in law.” (*To listen to Richard’s Widenhouse Award acceptance speech, visit <http://youtu.be/MAtEOArS10>*).

We know that Richard is one of many students across North Carolina who has developed critical thinking, communication, and leadership skills through their participation in mock trial. We extend a hearty congratulations and best wishes to Richard and all of the other graduating seniors, and we look forward to hearing about your future accomplishments!

AND THE RESULTS ARE IN!

By Rich Manger

CCCE Secretary/Scoring Director

Congratulations to all the fine teams which made the 2013 NCAJ High School Mock Trial Competition an exciting success. Your teamwork, hard work and creativity reveal what talented young men and women you are.

We at the Carolina Center for Civic Education strive to provide our wonderful students with legal cases that are relevant and fun to work on. In creating these cases, we are committed to achieving balance so that the scale is not tilted favorably toward one side or the other straight out of the gate. Furthermore, we work diligently to educate your presiding judges and scoring jurors on the rules of evidence and procedure within which the mock trial teams work, the rules of the competition, and the case materials. Our goal is to assure balanced and neutral scoring for all teams.



As the Scoring Director for our statewide competition, I am responsible for educating our site coordinators and official scorers about our modified power-matching system of scoring. In that system, we adjust straight power-matching to ensure that every team has the opportunity to portray both sides of the case once, as well as to meet different opponents in each round. In this capacity, I am also committed to the goal of all of us at CCCE to assure a fair scoring system that accurately reflects the strength of the performances of team members.

The results from the eight regionals for 2013 indicate that CCCE’s efforts have been effective. This year’s very interesting and timely case was developed by our Program Coordinator, Sue Heath Johnson. Based on the results of all regional rounds, Sue clearly gave us the gift of a well-balanced case. Out of 62 rounds of trials, 31 rounds were won by the plaintiff and 31 by the defense. Not only were the end results dead even, but the ballots won were almost even. Out of 186 ballots from our scoring jurors in those trials, 94 ballots were won by the plaintiff and 92 were won by the defense.

The balance even extends to the total points earned by teams statewide. The total points awarded to all teams arguing as Plaintiff from all ballots were 15,192. Points awarded to all teams arguing for the Defendant totaled 15,062. That represents a mere 0.9% variance between points awarded to each side.

Is it possible to get much more balanced?

All of us with CCCE are devoted to providing our students with a mock trial scoring system of the highest integrity. We will continue to evaluate our scoring system and its actual application in trial to assure all of you the best mock trial experience possible.

Thank you all for your inspiring work. We look forward to seeing you again in 2014, unless you up and decide to graduate!

THANK YOU TO OUR 2012-13 OUTREACH PROGRAM SPONSORS!

**Lawyers Mutual Liability Insurance Company of North Carolina
North Carolina Lawyers Weekly
Mary Duke Biddle Foundation**

We still need more sponsorship support to fully realize the goals of our outreach program. If you can join us in this important outreach, please contact Sue at SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com or CCCE Vice-President Rebecca Britton at rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com

THANK YOU TO OUR 2012-13 COMPETITION SPONSORS!

State Finals: Rudolf Widenhouse & Fialko
Asheville: Melrose, Seago & Lay, P.A.
Charlotte: The Sumwalt Law Firm
Durham: The Law Offices of James Scott Farrin
Fayetteville: Britton Law, P.A.
Greenville: Hardee & Hardee, LLP
High Point: Crumley Roberts, LLP
Raleigh: Twiggs Strickland & Rabenau, P.A.
Wilmington: Shipman & Wright, LLP

CAMPBELL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW - partnering with NCAJ to host our State Finals!

IT TAKES A VILLAGE . . .

Special thanks to Mock Trial Committee Members and Regional Coordinators who served for the 2012/2013 season: Mark Melrose (Asheville Regional Coordinator), Paul Goodson (Charlotte Regional Coordinator), Russell Johnson (Durham Regional Coordinator), Philip Entzminger (Greenville Regional Coordinator), Rich Manger and Adrienne Blocker (High Point Regional Coordinators), Christine Scheef (Raleigh Regional Coordinator), John H. Anderson, Jr., (Wilmington Regional Coordinator), Ken Campbell, Sheila Chavis, Elizabeth Kuniholm, Carlos Mahoney, Chris Nichols, John O'Neal, Katy Parker, Elizabeth Spruill, and Mark Sumwalt.

Special thanks also to our Site Coordinators who served at Regionals in the 2012/2013 season!

Asheville: Cindy Bryson, Charlotte: Beverly K. Moore, Durham: Patti Clapper, Fayetteville: Elizabeth Owens, Greenville: Kristin Miller; High Point: Karen Parrish, Raleigh: Lakisha Chichester and Fran LaFrankie, Wilmington: Brandy Jo Lea.

*****If you are interested in serving on the NCAJ Mock Trial Committee, please contact either Sue Johnson, Program Coordinator, at sueheathjohnson@gmail.com, or Rebecca Britton or Gordon Widenhouse, Committee Co-Chairs, at rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com or mgwidenhouse@yahoo.com.***